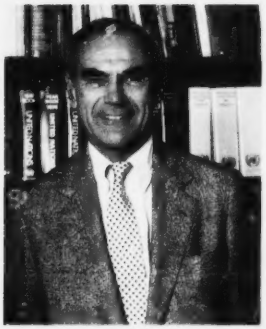

Experience has shown that any meaningful initiative towards poverty alleviation must motivate and involve the very people it seeks to assist.

The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) embarked on the Participatory Development Programme in the early 1980s. It tackles critical poverty by promoting self-help activities at the grassroots level through an exchange of Domestic Development Services (DDS) field workers. Over the years, these agents of change have stimulated countless achievements by the communities they serve.

This booklet distils the enormous number and variety of ways in which DDS field workers have assisted people at the grassroots to define priorities, organize themselves and obtain outside support on their own terms. The results, in the shape of people being helped to help themselves, are outstanding. This publication is a fitting tribute to the dedication and consummate skills of these energetic men and women whose work at the grassroots should inspire all who are joined in the battle against poverty.

I am happy to reaffirm UNDP's support for this worthy initiative, which has helped many of the world's most needy and vulnerable groups secure better and more meaningful lives.

William H. Draper III
Administrator
United Nations Development Programme

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The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) is responsible for managing the Participatory Development Programme which aims to alleviate poverty by increasing community participation in local, self-help initiatives. The Programme pays particular attention to assisting vulnerable groups, including women, youth, the unemployed and the landless. Efforts are geared to meeting community priorities, such as improving living conditions, increasing food supplies and income for other necessities. Ensuring sound environmental management of local resources, and responding to basic education and health needs are other areas of focus.

Through the assignment of DDS field workers, the Programme promotes the sharing of successful grassroots experiences among community groups and organizations in developing countries. Participating groups can adapt approaches and activities successfully developed elsewhere and apply them to their own situations. DDS field workers themselves learn from the realities and experiences of their host communities, and make use of this knowledge upon their return home.

DDS field workers live and work at the community level, and their conditions of service are similar to those of their local co-workers. They possess skills often required at the grassroots, such as fish farming, animal husbandry, primary health care and handicrafts. But above all, they are skilled in promoting community organization and participatory activities.

Since its inception, approximately 1,000 DDS field workers have served in some 35 countries in Africa, Asia and in the South Pacific. A considerable number of returnees have continued in development work in their own countries, and some have started new grassroots action programmes.

Numerous development agencies have become associated with the DDS Programme. They are responding to the growing calls for help from communities wishing to better themselves, and are hoping to create a more enabling environment for local self-help initiatives to flourish.

This booklet highlights only a few of the many achievements realized by communities and supporting groups as a result of DDS field worker interventions. It brings development down to the basics: people helping people.

READEX
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Benin: Stirring People into Action

When the 1,500 inhabitants from Gnito gather to celebrate, they erect a multi-coloured tent especially made for festive occasions and prepare for a day of songs, drums and dance. Just two years ago, such a lively scene would have seemed out of place in Gnito, a remote, sleepy village 100 kilometres west of Benin's capital, Porto-Novo.

Missionaries who came to the village were rejected, because local people had their own traditional beliefs. APRETECTRA, a grassroots association that promotes the use of traditional technologies, tried several times to assist the village in launching self-help projects to improve living conditions, but the population remained uncooperative.

"People here had unhappy experiences in the past when their own nationals would come and assist them for a while, and then ask for gifts or even money upon leaving," says Yaovi Foli, coordinator for DDS activities in Benin, who is from Togo. "They became mistrustful." APRETECTRA's request for a DDS field worker was a last ditch attempt to assist this reluctant community.

Kingiela Khondé, a 36-year-old agronomist from Zaire, arrived in Gnito in January 1990. "When I first arrived, I noticed that there was no community spirit at all," says the DDS field worker. Young people were bored and underemployed, village groups were disorganized, water and sanitation were nearly non-existent, and the school and health clinic were poorly maintained.

Gnito's residents gather to celebrate with songs and dance.

"My first priority was to interest them in improving the village infrastructure," says Mr. Khondé, "and I decided to begin by working with the young men."

To attract them, he created a football team and revived a theatre group that had been disbanded. In return, he asked the youths to help dig five small wells that would provide safe drinking water. Members of the football team say that when Mr. Khondé started recreational activities, it stimulated them to do something for the village.

After the wells were completed, other inhabitants approached Mr. Khondé to offer their help. "Because I was a foreigner, people started to respond to me with curiosity and interest," he says. Following a few health and sanitation meetings that he organized, Mr. Khondé created a health unit to maintain the village clinic, which had been barely used since 1986. "It was dirty," he says. "No records of births and deaths had been kept, but I heard that there had been several cases of child and maternal deaths in the past." Within weeks, the maternity ward was clean, basic cooking facilities had been installed, and with APRETECTRA's support, a trained birth attendant started to visit Gnito regu-

Two women shuck palm nuts to be processed into palm oil.

Photos by Françoise Gerber / UNDP

Mr. Khondé, left, visits the construction site for a new village house in Gnito.

bookkeeping methods, Mr. Khondé has helped one association that markets palm oil find a solution. "We now use standard-sized oil containers, so it is much easier to keep an inventory," says Biaou Adama, the group's secretary.

Mr. Khondé's activities are not limited to Gnito. On his motorcycle, he regularly visits nearby Djanglanmey where he assists other village groups, in collaboration with APRETECTRA and the German Volunteer Service. While he is committed to helping communities find solutions, he is also eager to learn from them. "It is an exchange, not a one-way street," he says.

Throughout Gnito a new community spirit is emerging. Young people attending school in urban areas have started visiting on weekends again. The football team practises every day. Graduates are returning to work in agriculture, and basic literacy courses are set to start soon. Still, a lot remains to be done: the school needs a new roof, and additional latrines must be built. But people have been stirred into action and Gnito's residents are excited about their future. ✤

larly. "We now keep records," says Mr. Khondé. "Between April 1990 and July 1991, we had 87 births, no child mortalities and one maternal death."

Mr. Khondé has also made progress with Gnito's farmers who grow maize, manioc, palm, bananas, beans and peppers. By introducing ordered cultivation techniques, he has helped increase yields. "Before he came, we would mix all the crops when planting our fields," a farmer says with a smile. "Now, we have learned row planting."

Because of the high illiteracy rate — about 90 per cent — groups have had problems keeping track of their production levels and income. By introducing simple

In the Midlands Province, Ms. Hodah Abdallah Igge, wearing white sweater, helps some women promote their crafts (left) and gives marketing tips to a pottery-making group.

Photos by I. Rajeswary / UNDP

Four years ago, a plot of land belonging to a group of women in Zimbabwe's Midlands Province produced a few groundnuts and beans, and was mostly overgrown with thorny bushes. Today, the six hectares are flourishing with rows and rows of cabbage, onions and spinach. Not only do the villagers have vegetables to supplement their diet, they now have enough to sell in the nearby town of Masvingo.

The women owe much of it to Hodah Abdallah Igge, a slender and energetic 27-year-old Tanzanian DDS field worker. When she visits them in their collective garden, they welcome her warmly by drumming on pails, dancing and singing folk songs.

Midlands Province is 340 kilometres south of Harare. Ms. Igge is based at Bondolfi, a local Catholic mission. Her work has put her in touch with over 300 village households located within a range of seven kilometres of Bondolfi.

Ms. Igge's success with the women's group earned her praise among the villagers. But it was not easy. She had to learn Shona, the main language spoken by the community. Ms. Igge speaks Swahili. To practise her Shona, she started going to church on Sundays.

"For me, it was more important to learn Shona and mingle with the local people than to worry about religious beliefs," says Ms. Igge, who is a Muslim. She now conducts meetings and training sessions in Shona.

But organizing the villagers into action also proved to be a challenge for her. Prior to her assignment, Ms. Igge worked for Tanzania's Ministry of Local Government where community development decisions would often come down from the top. But the DDS philosophy seeks to involve people at the grassroots level in decisions that affect their own lives, and puts them in charge of their own development. "I had to learn to restrain myself," she recalls.

Ms. Igge concentrated on motivating people to start small income-generating activities. While many of the women here are adept at basket-making, mat-weaving, crochet and pottery, they did not know how to market their products. Ms. Igge suggested they sell their crafts at the Great Zimbabwe Ruins, a popular tourist spot near Masvingo.

She encouraged a group of 10 early school leavers to mould bricks and clear land for a piggery project. She also motivated a group of elderly women to start

Zimbabwe: Turning Barren Land Bountiful

Ms. Igge, left, helps Mafuba village youths arrange bricks.

basket-making and needlework activities.

In Chibaya, she assisted villagers in pooling their resources to build a small bridge instead of waiting for the local municipality to provide one. And she prompted villagers in Gwava to start a vegetable garden and poultry farm.

Although the groups had launched a large number of income-generating activities, they had little knowledge about pricing, marketing and bookkeeping. In June 1991, Ms. Igge conducted a five-day training workshop in managerial skills for 10 local self-help groups. She plans to hold more in the future.

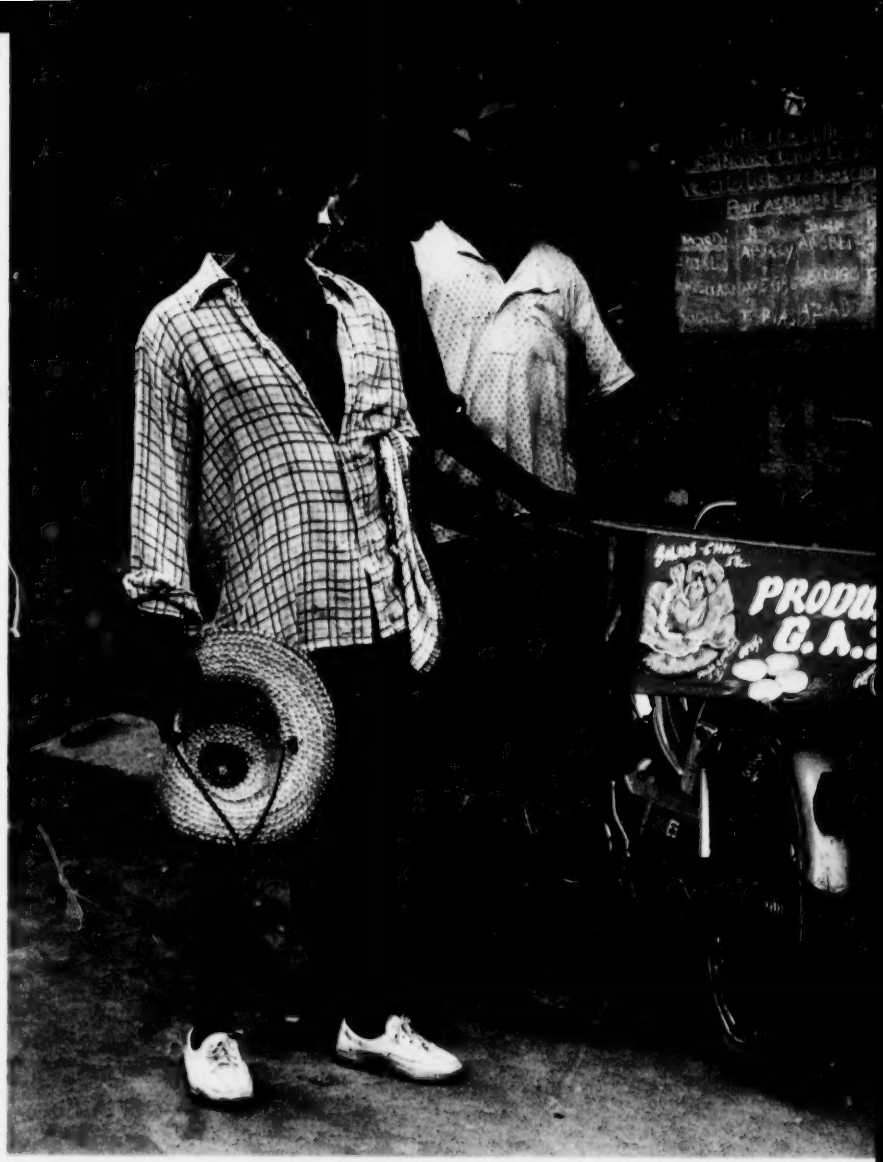
"We know that Ms. Igge will leave us someday," says one group member. "With the skills we have learned from her, we will never look back again. We can only go forward." ✤

Women in Midlands Province removing weeds from their vegetable plot.

On a humid afternoon in the mountainous cocoa and coffee region of Kpalimé, DDS field worker Gildas Doffonou is comforting members of GAPAK, a village group. Heavy rains over the past few days have washed away their vegetable garden. Gone with it is their hope for providing their own food.

Kpalimé, a city of about 28,000 people, 120 kilometres north of Lomé, Togo's capital, is a popular tourist resort. But over the past decade a steadily worsening economy has resulted in growing underemployment and job losses. Living conditions for local people have become very difficult, and many have had to find alternate ways to feed their families.

When eight tailors could no longer earn a decent living, agriculture became their only option. "It was very hard, because we knew nothing about farming," says Tavina Komi, one of the tailors. In May 1989, when they created GAPAK — *Groupement Agro-pastoral Kpalimé* — all they had was the energy and determination to succeed. They had no land of their own, so a friendly farmer lent them an uncultivated plot. They planted maize, manioc and a



Françoise Gerber / UNDP

Togo: Tailoring New Solutions

DDS field worker Gildas Doffonou, right, visits one of his village groups in Kpalimé.

few local vegetables. "What we really needed was someone to teach us about cultivation methods," says Mr. Komi. When they heard about Mr. Doffonou, and that he was assisting another village nearby, they approached him for help.

Mr. Doffonou soon began working with GAPAK and with two other groups in the Kpalimé region. Before coming to Togo, he had studied agriculture and animal husbandry in Benin, and construction techniques in Côte d'Ivoire. His many technical skills have enabled him to help village groups with different needs.

GAPAK group members meet with Mr. Doffonou nearly every day. "These people are hard-working and have a real team spirit," says Mr. Doffonou. "They have already accomplished a lot." By helping them select the best vegetables to plant and by teaching them basic gardening techniques, he has helped to improve their nutrition and livelihoods.

"Mr. Doffonou does not only advise us, he also shares the workload," says Mr. Komi. Within days of the flooding, GAPAK was ready to plant again. Now, the group is hoping to buy its own land to cultivate, and to plant more crops. With Mr. Doffonou's help, GAPAK members have begun making plans to raise sheep and rabbits, and to market fuelwood. He has also helped prepare two new project proposals for the group to be assisted by a DDS revolving fund and the German government. "We want to succeed," says Mr. Komi. "We want to show Mr. Doffonou that his efforts were not in vain."

The work of this DDS field worker does not end with GAPAK. He has taught farmers in other groups to build rabbit shelters with local materials, and has helped one community construct an improved irrigation system for vegetable gardening. "I am always looking for new solutions," he says. "It is a full-time job." ❖

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"Other volunteers have come to our village and showed us things, but our people would only watch from a distance. DDS has been different. It has motivated us to share in the work, and has got the community involved."

A village leader in Agome-Tomegbe

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Cameroon: Boosting Productivity

Togolese DDS field worker Komla Elom Agbali is based in Sa'a, which is a short drive from Yaoundé, Cameroon's capital. In this region, some 42,000 people live in 14 villages, and most make their living by farming. "I cover 10 kilometres a day visiting the many plots and villages," says Mr. Agbali, "and always travel on foot."

These farmers grow manioc, yams and maize, and such vegetables as tomatoes, onions and peppers. "I found that they planted their fields haphazardly, mixing all the crops together," says Mr. Agbali.

To improve their harvests he introduced more ordered cultivation techniques, which have brought better yields. A demonstration plot that he planted in Sa'a has helped to teach villagers the advantages of the agricultural practices he preaches, including the virtues of a trellis that he developed to keep tomato plants from dragging along the ground.

Linda Anderson, from Canada, the Country Officer of the DDS programme in Cameroon, feels that the farmers around Sa'a became accustomed to receiving aid during the post-colonial era, and that this kept them from taking their own initiatives. "There is a lack of community feeling, which is what the field workers here are trying to develop," Ms. Anderson says.

In another Cameroonian village, Magba, located in the central part of the country, DDS field worker Comlan Seydon Adjoh, from Togo, is also helping community members improve their work habits. Here, women spend much of their time smoking fish for sale. To increase their productivity, and to lessen the destruction of trees, Mr. Adjoh has taught the women how to use more advanced, fuel efficient ovens. The new Chorkor stoves, which enable women to smoke 15 trays of fish at one time, have resulted in enormous savings of time and firewood. ❖

Mary Lynn Hanley / UNDP

Mr. Agbali shows tomatoes which villagers have grown using a support structure he devised to Linda Anderson.

Magrimond Women's Development Club members dehusking their maize.

Zambia: Waking a Community's Spirit

Until two years ago, the 700 inhabitants of Magrimond, a village in Zambia's Kalomo district, had accepted poverty, illiteracy and poor health as facts of life. But change has come to this simple community of mud and bamboo huts, and it is being inspired by Mohammed Kargbo, a DDS field worker from Sierra Leone who arrived in 1989 to promote income-generating activities.

One notable achievement so far has been the creation of the Magrimond Women's Development Club, which Mr. Kargbo helped to form with 20 original members. It has secured land to grow maize and other cash crops, including Irish potatoes and beans. A soap-making enterprise has been started, as well as sewing and knitting projects.

To help the Club get going, Mr. Kargbo obtained a US$2,000 grant from UNDP's Partners in Development Programme, and used the funds to purchase equipment and materials needed for the Club's enterprises. He also instructed group members about farming techniques, and his lessons continue to pay off: a recent harvest yielded 2,200 kilograms of maize for the women's group. With income earned from the sale of produce, clothing and soap, the women raised enough money to make a substantial down payment on a grain milling machine, and borrowed the rest.

Results such as these have had positive effects throughout this community of small, thatched homes. Because of the sewing project, the women are now able to make

Magrimond Women's Development Club members in their soap-making activities.

clothes for their families, and are earning extra money by selling school uniforms in the community. "The Club has shown me how to help myself," says Maria Kanana, one of its founders. "I am sewing clothes for my grandchildren, and no longer have to pay for them."

The Club has also helped members secure individual plots of land for farming, allocated to them by district council authorities. The women now have their own vegetable gardens, which provide much needed food and income for their families. "Now our homes are happy and our marriages are holding," says Elizabeth Kasokola, a group member. "Our husbands cannot believe what we have done."

The group has gone on to launch a number of new ambitious projects, and has also motivated other village members to get

The Kalomo Youth Club is an important initiative tackling the problem of chronic unemployment among the country's young people. With assistance from DDS field worker Mohammed Kargbo, income-generating activities involving youth, including baking and sewing projects, have expanded and become successful.

Photos by Robert Mwihambi

involved. It is constructing new buildings to house the grain-milling and soap-making enterprises, and is building a shop to market its products. It has raised money to purchase and install hand pumps for clean drinking water, and has launched a drive to build new pit latrines throughout the village.

"Before the Club our lives were miserable," says Martha Musole, another of its members. "Now I know how to sew, knit, make soap and grow Irish potatoes. We have clean water and toilets. The whole community is changing and it is for the better." ✣

A tie-dye project has become an important income-generating activity for many villagers.

People Helping People

A Participatory Development Programme of
the United Nations Volunteers

Zimbabwe: Enabling Women to Take the Lead

When 25 women of Zimbabwe's Kushinga chrome mining community wanted to build an oven to bake bread last November, the men laughed. "They told us to be serious and not to fool around," recalls Melania Moyo, secretary of a newly formed women's group in Kushinga. But they had never been more serious.

The women were encouraged by DDS field worker Betty Lupobe, 26, who told them that if they organized themselves and pooled their resources they could achieve their goal. They were also motivated by the 500 inhabitants of the nearby Nehanda mining community, which had already benefited from Ms. Lupobe's advice. Under Ms. Lupobe's guidance, women there knitted sweaters and tailored clothes for sale. The men raised money to buy cows for slaughter and sold the meat in the commune. The families in Nehanda, a two-hour drive from the Zimbabwean capital of Harare, can now afford to eat meat, chicken and vegetables more often.

Realizing that the men were not going to help them, the women in Kushinga built the oven on their own. They completed it in a day and began baking buns which they sold in the community. In three months, the group earned US$100. The women now want to raise money to buy chickens and start a poultry farm. "Betty Lupobe helped us realize our dreams," says Ms. Moyo.

Ms. Lupobe, a Zambian, was first assigned to Nehanda in August 1989. "The people were sceptical about me," she recalls. "They wondered how someone as young as I am could be of any help." It mattered little that she was trained in promoting participatory development by Zambia's Institute of Cultural Affairs. Determined to overcome this scepticism

Photos by T Rajeswary / UNDP

Betty Lupobe (left), with mat-weavers in Nehanda.

Women in Kushinga warm baking trays in an oven they built.

and to motivate people to improve their lives, she visited every thatched hut in the community to meet the people, and to learn about their problems and skills. "When they realized that I was there to help," says Ms. Lupobe, "they warmed towards me."

Most men in the community work long hours in the chrome mines, and their wages are often insufficient to provide for their families. Nutrition is poor and most parents cannot afford to send their children to school. Women had few opportunities and were given no part in decision-making.

With Ms. Lupobe's assistance, 30 women in Nehanda contributed $2 each to form a group. They invested the money in knitting needles and wool, and started fashioning sweaters for Zimbabwe's cold months. "The women were thrilled," Ms. Lupobe says. "People in the community were competing to buy the sweaters even before they were finished."

Having raised enough money from the sale of sweaters, the women qualified for a $1,500 loan from the DDS revolving fund to buy three sewing machines. They now tailor dresses and school uniforms for sale as well.

The success of the women spurred some 20 men in Nehanda to form their own group, which raised money to purchase livestock for slaughter. The group later secured a $1,700 loan from the DDS fund to buy a freezer to store the meat, which they sell in the community. Now a chicken coop is nearing completion. "Without Betty," says John Jali, a miner and secretary of the men's group, "we would have never organized ourselves."

Ms. Lupobe trained members of both groups in project planning and simple bookkeeping. As the quality of life in Nehanda improved, word spread to other communities, and to nearby Kushinga, where women were eager to start their own group.

"I was very impressed with the women there," says Ms. Lupobe, "they organized themselves and succeeded." The men in Kushinga are not sceptical anymore. On the contrary, they are forming an income-generating group of their own. ✣

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"The income-generating projects involving women make them independent and changes the village structure. It is like throwing a stone into a pool, the effects are felt all around."

Helmut Weyers, Programme Manager of DDS in Africa

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Ezéhiel Dossou was the first inhabitant of Modji-Gangan to start a vegetable garden with help from DDS field worker Batoumani Diallo.

Benin: Basic Foods for Better Health

In the village of Modji-Gangan, tomatoes, carrots and cabbage now grow all year long. But it took time and perseverance. "When I started talking about vegetable gardening in the parched soil here," says DDS field worker Batoumani Diallo, "villagers told me I was crazy."

The 30-year-old agronomist from Mali was among the first DDS field workers assigned to Benin. In September 1988, when he arrived in Modji-Gangan, 200 kilometres north of Porto-Novo, he was welcomed by the village's 400 inhabitants. But he soon became puzzled by their eating habits. "In Mali, I was used to eating lots of vegetables. Here, the diet of most people, including pregnant women and nursing mothers, consisted mainly of manioc flour called *garri*," says Mr. Diallo. Meat was scarce, rice was considered a luxury. Eight children died of malnutrition between October 1988 and January 1989, and the population accepted the deaths as a curse.

While thinking about ways to improve nutrition in the village, Mr. Diallo decided to learn the local language. He joined literacy classes with a women's group in Modji-Gangan which grows cassava and maize. With Mr. Diallo's help, the group received a DDS loan of US$1,000 to start a cereal bank that would ensure food supplies when stocks are low.

Mr. Diallo wanted to interest villagers in vegetable gardening, but his suggestion was met with reluctance and scepticism. "Farmers would tell me: 'how can you expect us to grow vegetables when we do not have enough water'," he says. They were right. Modji-Gangan, at that time, did not have ample water. However, by September 1989, through a UNICEF project, a pump was installed at the centre of the village. Mr. Diallo convinced the population to raise $250 for its maintenance.

Even with running water, farmers remained reluctant to grow vegetables. In this region, men have a reputation of working very little. But Mr. Diallo's friendship with one of them would soon change that. Ezéhiel Dossou, a carpenter, had left Modji-Gangan to seek employment in Cotonou but returned when he could not find work. He often visited the DDS field worker. "He was the only villager ready to try vegetable gardening," says Mr. Diallo.

Mr. Dossou started planting local and imported vegetables in November 1989. It was a difficult task. The bush had to be cleared and trees had to be cut. Yet, when carrots and tomatoes started to sprout within a few months, his garden quickly became an attraction. "Without Mr. Diallo's support, I would never have succeeded," says Mr. Dossou.

In less than a month, several groups started to cultivate plots. By July 1991, a village garden covering half an hectare had been created, as well as eight individual parcels spanning 1,000 square metres each. Five neighbouring villages have since requested DDS help to launch similar activities.

In Modji-Gangan, people are now improving their incomes and their diets. Rice-growing has started in the village, and Mr. Diallo is leading nutrition awareness meetings. He has already noticed one very significant result. "Now, a whole month can go by without any children dying," he says.

Mr. Diallo also assists a number of other community groups, including one formed by several young men who have set up a welding workshop. The men earn extra income by repairing cars, and by making doors and windows for their community. Recently, when their operations were threatened by machine failure, Mr. Diallo helped secure a vital spare part available only in France. ✤

Above: A group of young welders in their workshop in Modji-Gangan.

Batoumani Diallo in Modji-Gangan.

Photos by Françoise Gerber / UNDP

Photo by Siddharth Dube / UNDP

Gefarina Djohan teaches villagers how to cheaply prepare a rehydration solution.

India: Easing the Effects of Drought

Rocelyn Delfin, centre is helping villages in Somka improve infertile land.

In the district of Bharatpur, 200 kilometres west of New Delhi, four DDS field workers are at the centre of an extraordinary effort to improve living conditions in the area's poor farming communities. Rocelyn Delfin from the Philippines, Nazrul Islam from Bangladesh, and Gefarina Djohan and Suharman Noerman from Indonesia are working with the Lupin Rural Support Programme (LRSP) to find ways to help local people raise their incomes. To function here, in this region without industries, they have had to become fluent in a dialect of Hindi that many Hindi-speaking people from other areas can barely understand.

One major challenge has been to ease the effects of a long drought that has been afflicting Bharatpur. On this steamy July day, Mr. Islam is working with a community group in the dusty village of Abhora to improve a poorly maintained pond. The size of a small sports field, the pond contains only a pool of ankle-deep water standing in one corner. At Mr. Islam's urging, it is being deepened and widened. By the next rains, it will be able to hold more water and could help prevent a severe water shortage. "Our life will be perfect if we have one more deep pond for irrigation," said Mahadeva Singh, the village headman.

Because of the shortage of clean drinking water in Bharatpur, children have frequently fallen sick with diarrhoea. In the village of Palka, Ms. Djohan is teaching worried mothers how to prepare a solution of salt, sugar and water that prevents severe dehydration in children. This oral rehydration formula is available in packets in India. But Ms. Djohan, with spoon, glass, sugar and salt in hand is showing village mothers how cheap and easy it is to prepare this life-saving mixture on their own.

An hour's drive away in the village of Somka, Ms. Delfin is doing very different work. Vast areas of land surrounding the village are heavily alkaline and cannot be used for agriculture. This has contributed to the community's pervasive poverty. However, drawing on her experience as an agriculture engineer, Ms. Delfin has taught farmers to treat the soil with large amounts of gypsum and zinc sulphate, which has already made 20 hectares of barren land fertile and productive.

LRSP, which has the support of an Indian pharmaceutical firm, government officials, and grassroots organizations, is also seeking to introduce family planning to Bharatpur, and Mr. Noerman and Mr. Islam are helping. As Muslims, they have had easy access to the many Muslim communities in the area, and have been able to lead discussions on this sensitive topic. LRSP staff say they are surprised and happy to see this happen. "If they are successful, it will be a breakthrough for us," said Sitaram Gupta, the programme's chief coordinator. ❖

DDS field worker Muthukumar Chelliah from India, a specialist in bee handling, transfers bees by the handful to their new hive.

Malaysia: Reaping the Rewards of Entrepreneurship

In the village of Serkat, on the southern tip of the Malay peninsula, Muthukumar Chelliah, a DDS field worker from India, has become an invaluable addition to the community. This is despite being a bee-keeper — a seemingly hazardous occupation that was little known to Malaysians.

Mr. Chelliah and his bees are an asset to many families in Serkat and other nearby villages. In the last year, he has helped to distribute over 1,000 beehives through the community centre where he works. The new bee-keepers each make about US$50 every month from selling honey. Bee-keeping requires little time, and in these communities it has become an important supplementary income.

Mr. Chelliah and Malaysia's most famous bee-keeper, Andek Mawik, work as a team. Neither uses protective gear, braving the many stings from angry bees. While Mr. Mawik was trained in the US, Mr. Chelliah, who is 27, learned bee-keeping at the YMCA Rural Development Center, a grass-roots organization in southern India.

Apart from teaching bee-keeping with Mr. Mawik, Mr. Chelliah helped a group of 20 people apply for funds from the Trickle Up Program, a US non-profit organization funded in part by UNDP which provides small grants to grassroots groups. Mr. Chelliah's bee project was one

of the first large initiatives to be approved by the organization.

Each family received a one-time grant of $100 — sufficient to buy 16 hives. "People have little money here," says Mr. Chelliah. "We had to give them a push."

The push worked even better than he hoped. The bee farmers formed a cooperative to sell honey. Then the federal government chipped in with an expensive packaging machine that packs honey into small plastic containers. These are cheaper than glass jars, and many poor people in the area can now afford to buy honey.

Much of Mr. Chelliah's success in motivating communities comes from his years of work with grassroots organizations in India. Like many DDS field workers, Mr. Chelliah was an active community organizer when he applied to join DDS. He worked in his home district of Kanya Kumari where, as in Malaysia, he introduced many people to bee-keeping.

This is Mr. Chelliah's second assignment in Malaysia. He says that while rural Malaysians are often educated and well-trained, they lack money to start small businesses. As a DDS field worker, he has spent much of his time finding solutions to this shortage of funds.

Soon scheduled to return to India, Mr. Chelliah says he will stay involved in community work back home, actively spreading the gospel of bee-keeping. ❖

Local bee-keeper Osman Mos and Mr. Chelliah attaching honeycombs to wooden frames.

Photos by Vince Roberts / UNDP

In the impoverished shanty towns of Manila, Rekha Lutfun Nahar, a DDS field worker, assists an intensive feeding programme for severely malnourished children. She helps hundreds every year obtain food, vitamins and medicine, but countless others outside her reach remain ill and die prematurely. The poverty in this vast city, says Ms. Nahar, is as pervasive as that of her native Bangladesh.

Four hundred kilometres to the south, Koralalage Bandara, a Sri Lankan, is a DDS field worker in the village of Balingasag on Panay Island. The region is stripped of forest cover and is frequently torn by typhoons. Farming conditions are harsh, and most families here have little to save. A recent typhoon destroyed most of the village's crops. Mr. Bandara has helped start a farmers' group, and many of its members have begun to terrace their rice fields and to plant vegetables in their yards. He hopes these steps may prevent a food shortage in the months ahead.

Two hours south by car from Balingasag, Jayasinghe Banda, also from Sri Lanka, is on his second assignment as a DDS field worker. Mr. Banda has worked for years in agricultural extension. His skills and commitment were what the Panay State Polytechnic College needed to start extension projects at its new Dumarao campus. Mr. Banda's five months here have been a whirlwind of activity. He encouraged parents of young children in Agglana to donate money for a pre-school day-care centre.

Rekha Lutfun Nahar, left, works with malnourished children in Manila.

The Philippines: Helping to Build Better Lives

They were so happy with the centre that they are now constructing a new building for it. Mr. Banda and the villagers have also started a cooperative that supplies vegetable seedlings to its members. Borrowers are required to return a larger amount of seedlings the following year.

With 10 DDS field workers in the Philippines, UNV is responding to the needs of the country's troubled rural areas and migrant-filled cities. The field workers have played a crucial role in helping the poor take initiatives to raise their incomes.

Salvacion Solidarios, a retired high school teacher, and some 300 other people, learned brick-making from Wing Wijoseno, an Indonesian DDS field worker at the Ilonggo Development Center Foundation. Ms. Solidarios then travelled to India to study community development under a DDS training programme. Returning to Bolalacao, her native village, Ms. Solidarios set up a training and brick-making unit in the yard of her home. She also encouraged 12 other families to build similar "backyard units" with funds provided by the Trickle Up Program. Recently, the government certified the bricks made in Ms. Solidarios' unit for commercial sale. "We now make bricks by the thousands," Ms. Solidarios says, noting that each family earns over US$30 per month, doubling their incomes. ✲

Salvacion Solidarios, trained by DDS field workers, now teaches people in her village how to make bricks.

Photos by Siddharth Dube / UNDP

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"DDS workers play a critical role. Local people are pushed to work harder because they feel their self-image is at stake with foreigners working in their communities."

Vicente Hao Chin, Jr.
President,
Theosophical Society of the Philippines

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Lawrence Aldo donated two hectares to help start a vegetable farm. Inset, Kolinio Ulakia, the first DDS field worker in the Pacific.

When Stanley Kwaifi, a shopkeeper in Malaita, Solomon Islands, sits down to dinner with his family, his plate is filled with an assortment of tinned meats and fish from such countries as Australia, Japan, South Korea and New Zealand. There is rice imported from China and orange squash from the United Kingdom. One would never know that Mr. Kwaifi lives on an island with fertile soils and abundant rainfall.

This meal, devoid of fresh vegetables and fruits, is typical of the Solomon Islands diet. Little wonder that diabetes, hypertension, obesity and malnutrition are rampant. Children suffer from vitamin A deficiency, which causes night blindness.

A survey recently conducted in Honiara, the capital, determined that 80 per cent of the food that is now imported could be produced in the Solomon Islands.

To meet this challenge, and to create self-employment opportunities, DDS is mobilizing community groups for farming and fishing. One such group in the village of Tabagere on Malaita has brought together 130 villagers, young and old.

"Mobilizing villagers is no easy task," says Kolinio Ulakia, from Fiji, the first DDS field worker in the Pacific, now coordinating DDS in Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. "Community participation beyond the extended family does not come naturally to the Solomon Islanders. Furthermore, farming and other rural work are not popular among youth here. Most aspire to white collar jobs." But very few of the 20,000 youths who graduate from school every year are able to find jobs in the formal sector.

Hoping to interest people here in farming, Lawrence Aldo, the leader of the Tabagere Village Group, attended a week-long DDS course in project planning, leadership and management held in Honiara. He later returned to his village to start a vegetable-growing group, assisted by Siale Havea, a DDS field worker from the Kingdom of Tonga working in Tabagere. Mr. Aldo, a traditional chief who owns a large tract of land, donated two hectares to help the group start a vegetable farm, which contains both individual and communal

The Solomon Islands: Cashing In on New Crops

plots. DDS helped the villagers secure money from the Taiwanese Embassy in Honiara for seeds and tools, and also provided advice on mixed cropping, pest control, mulching techniques, simple nutrition and marketing. Now, locally grown tomatoes, Chinese cabbage, beans, peanuts, potatoes, carrots and maize have become common.

In the beginning, Mr. Havea made frequent visits to Tabagere to maintain the group's interest in farming. This was not always easy as he has several projects in far-flung villages, and transport is a problem. Even though each DDS field worker is issued a bicycle, getting around is difficult in most of the Solomon Islands because of bad roads. Sometimes they travel by foot, walking for more than two days. To get from one island to another, they paddle dug-out canoes.

To date, the group in Tabagere has successfully harvested three crops, and has reinvested profits back into their farm. The group members no longer need to be wooed. "The cash in their pockets and the tastier, locally grown produce on their tables are clear evidence of the project's benefits," says Mr. Ulakia.

To diversify the group's activities, DDS is helping it build a community centre near the farm with a US$10,000 grant from the Netherlands. It will be used for adult literacy, nutrition and hygiene classes. Sewing, weaving, and recreational activities will also be accommodated. ✲

Sister Lawrencia of the Divit Training Centre, offers sewing advice.

Photos by Hilda Pagur / UNDP

On a warm Saturday afternoon, Sister Lawrencia and three of the 60 young women attending the Solomon Islands' Divit Training Centre sit by the Pacific Ocean working on their latest project: mat-weaving. Located in the village of Visale, 42 kilometres west of Honiara, the Centre was set up in 1971 to prepare young women for family life. It has since expanded its activities and teaches important skills to help women enter the job market and to prepare for self-employment.

It offers much-needed training in home economics, bookkeeping, English, mathematics, agriculture, secretarial skills and primary health care. "The Centre is playing an important role in improving the status of women of the Solomon Islands," says Philip Kapal, from Papua New Guinea, the DDS field worker who is assisting it. "We are proud to be involved."

DDS began working with the Centre in 1990 when it provided a small grant to purchase fabrics along with five sewing machines for the home economics class. It also assisted the Centre in obtaining funding from the New Zealand High Commission, which it needed to buy additional equipment, and helped the school's former principal receive training in basket-making, mat-weaving and cane work.

On a sultry day last July, Lui Bello arrived by bush plane on Suvaii, Western Samoa's largest and most populated island. Here, he would face one of the toughest challenges in his career. The tall, soft-spoken native of Fiji, a DDS field worker, was set to become a motor mechanics instructor at the Tuasivi Vocational Technical Centre, to teach students how to repair engines of light automobiles, motor boats and lawn mowers. First he would have to learn Samoan, the local language, and master it sufficiently to instruct at the Centre. "I am ready for the challenge," says Mr. Bello, 24, "because the youth of Western Samoa need me."

Two-thirds of the 175,000 Western Samoans are between the ages of 14 and 30, says Josephine Keelan, manager of DDS in the Pacific, based in the capital, Apia. Most young Western Samoans are unemployed, frustrated and impoverished, and lack proper education and training. Employment opportunities in the formal sector are available to a mere 20 per cent of them.

Many youths are drawn to urban centres by illusions of opportunity, only to confront the very problems they sought to escape. Often they resort to burglary, drugs, alcohol, even suicide. Western Samoa is reputed to have one of the highest rates of suicide in the world.

To help deal with the country's deepen-

Students at Tuasivi Vocational Technical Centre.

Photos by Hilda Paqui / UNDP

Western Samoa: Grooming Youth for the Workplace

ing unemployment crisis and to curb the urban drift, the Boys Brigade — a self-help organization — created the all-male Tuasivi Vocational Technical Centre in 1988. "We only enrol the very poor, the underprivileged and drop-outs," says Levi Mulitalo, the Centre's founder and acting principal. "We turn away everybody else since they are likely to get a chance elsewhere."

DDS helped draft the project proposal to set up the facility, and sent Mr. Mulitalo to study how other vocational training centres operate in Fiji. Afterwards, the Congressional Church of Western Samoa donated 1,000 square metres of swampy land.

The Governments of Australia, Canada and New Zealand provided funds for land reclamation and for building the Centre's carpentry unit. A year later, UNDP's Partners in Development Programme financed the construction of its motor mechanics workshop. Labour and additional funding were contributed by the local Boys Brigade. UNV, the US Peace Corps and AESOP, an Australian non-governmental organization, have provided instructors.

In a two-year course, the Centre offers training in carpentry, construction, joinery, brick-making, wood carving, draughtmanship, and auto mechanics. These skills are in short supply in Western Samoa. "We also give instruction in accounting, quality control, mathematics, leadership, administration, English and Samoan," says Mr. Mulitalo. Each youth pays about US$33 per year for tuition, and fellowships are offered to the neediest students.

During the course, students are encouraged to earn money by practising their newly acquired skills. Already, they have built several large cement water tanks for the Centre, the district hospital, a neighbouring college and for two villages in Suvaii. They have also renovated the Tuasivi College Hall. Profits from their work have helped pay for the Centre's costs. But they also keep a share of their earnings, and many have opened savings accounts.

"I have earned money to buy food and clothes, and to supplement the family income," says Lami Samu, a sixth grade drop-out who is now a star student at the Centre. "I can now hold my head high, and my family and friends respect me."

Mr. Samu, together with 15 of the original 38 students, will graduate this December. Five of them, including Mr. Samu, will stay on as instructors. Each graduate will receive a start-up tool kit worth $87, and most are expected to return to their villages and to provide goods and services at affordable prices.

"It has been most gratifying to watch the Centre grow, and to see the benefits it has brought," says Mr. Baledrokadroka, from Fiji, a DDS Regional Officer who recruits field workers for the Pacific. Next year, the Centre plans to expand by adding plumbing, electrical work and welding to its training list, and will begin enrolling women. Because of its success, plans are also being made to open another vocational centre in Apia. ✲

DDS is helping Western Samoans diminish deforestation and improve their diets by introducing such root crops as groundnuts, sweet potatoes and cassava, which grow well in low-fertility soils. Because of shifting cultivation practices by farmers who grow taro, it is estimated that the country is losing 1,000 hectares of forest annually. So far, 15 root crop gardens have been established under this important initiative, and are being worked by young people that have been organized and trained by DDS field worker Siva Bobo, in the striped shirt, who is from Fiji. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN is providing seeds and technical advice.

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